

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T KHARTOUM 1909

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SU
SUBVJECT: POSSIBLE RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN NIMEIRI AND SADIQ AL-MAHDI

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 1802, (B) KHARTOUM 1740

SUMMARY: NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SADIQ AL-MAHDI AND
SUDANGOV LEADERSHIP CONTINUING. SADIQ HAS INDICATED
HE WILL MEET NIMEIRI IN SUDAN JUNE 27. SOME DETAILS
OF OVERALL AGREEMENT REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT.
MEANWHILE, MUSLIM BROMHER LEADER APPARENTLY BEING
BROUGHT INTO NEGOTIATION. END SUMMARY.

1. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SADIQ AL-MAHDI AND NIMEIRI
MOVING FORWARD, AND TOP LEADERSHIP SUDANGOV NOW INVOLVED
AS WELL. FATH ABD AL-RAHMAN BESHIR, BUSINESSMAN WHO IS GO-
BETWEEN, RECENTLY BROUGHT BACK SADIQ'S REPLY TO NIMEIRI'S
LAST LETTER (REFTELS). SADIQ HAS AGREED TO MEET NIMEIRI
ANYWHERE LATTER WISHES IN SUDAN. MEETING NOW EXPECTED TAKE

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PLACE JUNE 27, AND NO RPT SW PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED
UNTIL AFTERWARDS.

2. BESHIR MET WITH NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, CHAIRED
BY FIRST VP BAGHIR, PROBABLY ON JUNE 2. WE UNDERSTAND
PM BAKR AND SSU SECRETARY GENERAL ABUL GASSEM, NEITHER OF
WHOM ARE ON NSC, ALSO PARTICIPATED. NSC EXPRESSED CONCERN

OVER PUBLIC REACTION TO REHABILITATION OF SADIQ, BUT BESHIR SAID HE THOUGHT DESIRE FOR INTERNAL PEACE OUTWEIGHED ANY ANIMOSITY FELT TOWARD SADIQ FOR HIS ROLE IN LAST JULY'E :970 -553.05. ANYWAY QUOTE FOREIGNERS UNQUOTE WOULD BE BLAMED FOR DEATHS MORE THAN SADIQ. NSC THEN ASKED WHAT WOULD SADIQ WANT AND WAS TOLD MERELY TO RETURN AS FREE CITIZEN. HOWEVER, NSC MADE CLEAR IT WANTS PQJLIC COMMITMENT TO REGIME BY SADIQ AND THAT MEANS HE MUST ACCEPT IMPORTANT PUBLIC POSITION. NSC ASKED BESHIR ABOUT SADIQ'S WEIGHT IN NATIONAL FRONT, AND HE REPLIED THAT SADIQ WAS SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT LEADER. IF SADIQ DEFECTS FROM OPPOSITION, FRONT WILL BE SERIOUSLY WEAKENED.

3. IN TURN BESHIR ASKED TWO QUESTIONS OF NSC. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT ARMY'S REACTION WOULD BE, AND WE UNDERSTAND HE WAS ASSURED ARMY WOULD SUPPORT RAPPROCHEMENT. HE THEN ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO MEET WITH HASSAN AL-TURABI WHO IS IN JAIL, IS MARRIED TO SADIQ'S SISTER AND IS LEADER MUSLIM BROTHERS IN SUDAN. PERMISSION WAS GRANTED, BUT WE DO NOT RPT NOT YET KNOW RESULTS OF MEETING.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON OTHER MATTERS MININT, WHO PARTICIPATED IN NSC MEETING WITH BESHIR, SAID PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID OPPONENTS OF REGIME WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO SUDAN WAS MEANT TO INCLUDE SADIQ AND HUSSEIN AL-HINDI.

5. COMMENT: SADIQ-NIMEIRI RAPPROCHEMENT STILL BEING
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HELD EXTREMELY CLOSELY, BUT SEVERAL OFFICIALS NOW INVOLVED WHEREAS UNTIL WEEK OR SO AGO ONLY NIMEIRI AND BESHIR KNEW OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. APPEARS THAT NIMEIRI PROBABLY WILL BE ABLE BRING HIS COLLEAGUES ALONG WITH HIM. THIS INCLUDES ARMY WHICH IS LARGELY ANSAR AND KHATMIA (I.E., OF SAME GROUPS THAT PROVIDE MOST SUPPORT TO NATIONAL FRONT). MOREOVER, WITH GROWING CONCERN OVER LIBYA/ETHIOPIA/SOVIET ACTIVITIES NEARBY, NEUTRALIZATION OF SADIQ, WOULD GREATLY EASE PRESSURES ON SUDANGOV IN GENERAL AND ARMY IEQZHARTICULAR. WITH INCLUSION OF MUSLIM BROTHERS SUGGESTED BY BESHIR-TURABI TALKS, THERE APPEARS EFFORT UNDERWAY TO ISOLATE COMMUNISTS AND OTHER DIE-HARD OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN NATIONAL FRONT. BOGOSIAN

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